We shall now take up clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill.

Clauses 2 to 115 were added to the Bill.

Clause 116

Amendment of Act 32 of 1994

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: On clause 116, there are three amendments, from number one to number three, by Shri K. Rahman Khan. Mr. Rahman Khan, are you moving your amendments?

SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: In view of the assurance given by the hon. Minister, I feel that the suggestions and amendments which I have given are reasonable and logical. I am sure that there is a mistake. I am not asking the Finance Minister not to bring more professionals in the range of Service Tax. The point I want to impress upon is that it is discriminatory and it will not stand the test of law. Do not force people to take recource to law. This will only encourage litigation. After all, we are parliamentarians and we are making a law. The law should be justifiable. There should be equity and justice in this regard. It is totally unjust and discriminatory. I hope, and as it has been stated by the Finance Minister, that it will definitely receive his attention. Therefore, I do not move my amendments.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, the question is:

"That clause 116 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 116 was added to the Bill.

Clauses 117 to 119, the First Schedule, the Second Schedule, the Third Schedule, the Fourth Schedule, the Fifth Schedule and the Sixth Schedule were added to the Bill.

Clause 1, the Enacting Formula and the Title were added to the Bill.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Madam, I move:

"That the Bill the returned."

The question was proposed.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Madam, with regard to sports, he can give an assurance. ....*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Madam, this is a point which has been raised very forcefully by my friend Prof. Vijay Kumar Malhotra and Mr. Vayalar Ravi jointed him. There is already a reduction of 50 per cent on any contribution to a sports fund. This is a suggestion which has been made strongly in this House and it will receive my attention.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, the question is:

"That the Bill be returned."

The motion was adopted.

8.00 P.M.

MESSAGE FROM THE LOK SABHA

The Electricity Laws (Amendment) Bill, 1998

SECRETARY-GENERAL: Sir, I have to report to the House the following message received from the Lok Sabha signed by the Secretary-General of the Lok Sabha:

> "In accordance with the provisions of rule 96 of the rules of procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, I am directed to enclose the Electricity Laws (Amendment) Bill, 1998, as passed by Lok Sabha at its sitting held on the 23rd July, 1998."

Sir, I lay the Bill on the Table.

THE DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, there is a statement by the Minister of Health and Family Welfare about the strike by Group C & D employees of hospitals in Delhi.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Strike by Group C & D Employees of Government Hospitals in Delhi

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI): Madam, the Group C & D employees of hospitals of the Central government, Government of NCT of Delhi, Municipal Corporation of Delhi, New Delhi Municipal Council, ESIC, etc. have under the aegis of the Joint Council of JACKHU, CHEF, ESI & AIIMS have proceeded on strike with effect

from 20.7.1998 with a notice for proceeding on an indefinite strike from 25.7.1998 if their demands are not accepted by the Government. Their major demands include:

(i) Three Time Bound Promotions to all the Health Employees;

(ii) Better Pay-scale to be given to all Group C & D Employees;

(iii) Night Weightage Allowance, Risk & Hazard Allowance, Washing Allowance to be paid to them.

(iv) Patient Care Allowance prevailing in various hospitals/institutions be given at par to all Deprived Health Employees and PCA should be 25% of the basic pay; and

(v) All anomalies/disparities arising out of recommendations of 4th and 5th Pay Commissions be removed and uniformity in recruitment rules be brought out.

(vi) Implementation of the agreement signed on 23.9.1997, between JACKHU and the D.G.H.S.

The Vice-Chairman (Shri Sanatan Bisi) *in the chair.*

In pursuance of above demands, the Union adopted the following agitational programme:

May 22, 1998 Day long Dharna from 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. at respective hospitals in the groups of 10-12.

May 25, 1998 Indefinite relay hunger strike at Nirman Bhavan.

June 4, 1998 Mass demonstration in front of Nirman Bhavan.

June 5-9, 1998 Wearing of black badges.

June 10, 1998 Mass demonstration at Nirman Bhavan by all affiliate units as well as mass dharna by outstation health employees too.

June 16-20,1998 Two hours demonstration at each unit.

June 25-26, 1998 One day taken strike--(6.00 a.m. on 25th June, 1998 upto 6.00 p.m. 26th June, 1998).

July 9-10, 1998 48 hours token strike.

July 20-23, 1998 Indefinite strike if their demands are not considered.

Group of Ministers

The Government have set up a GOM to examine these demands. The GOM consists of:—

(i) Shri Yashwant Sinha, Minister of Finance.

(ii) Shri Dalit Ezhilmalai, Minister of State for Health & Family Welfare.

(iii) Shri K.R. Janarthanan, Minister of State in the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions and Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance (Banking Revenues, and Insurance).

Status of Negotiations:

Meetings with the representatives of the Joint Council have been held on 30th June, 7th July, 14th July and 22nd July, 1998 by the DGHS. I also held a meeting with them on 19th July, 1998.

The meetings of the GOM have been held on 13th July and 19th July, 1998. In the last meeting taken by the DGHS, on 22nd July, 1998 a substantial increase in the HPCA/PCA was offered to the striking employees along with an assurance that left out categories of employees connected with patient care will also get this benefit and also of washing allowance. This offer was not accepted by the employees who demanded that the increase in HPCA/PCA should be in proportion to the increase allowed in the Nursing Allownace to the nurses in Delhi Hospitals. They also demanded that there should be minimum three time bound promotions for every Group C & D Employees of hospitals.

These demands are being examined by the Government. The DGHS has also appealed to the Unions to withdraw their agitation and participate in the negotiations in the interest of patient care in the country.

Precautionary measures taken for maintenance of hospital facilities: Against this background, realising that all the measures which had been taken were not leading to a diffusion of the situation and further realising

that the strike would not be confined only to Central Government hospitals, but would involve the All India Insutitute of medical Sciences and all Delhi Hospitals, including those under the National Capital Territory of Delhi, including those under the Municipal Corporation, etc., including those under the Municipal Corporation, etc., the Union Health Secretary called a meeting on 8th July, 1998 where the Chief Secretary of the Delhi Government, the Home secretary, the Principal Health Secretary and a senior representative of Commissioner of Police attended. It was *inter alia* decided that:--

(i) The police would see that security was mounted at major hospitals so that doctors and others are not obstructed. Further, it was noted that if there was any avert incidence of manhandling of staff, disrupting of critical work, sabotage of equipment, the police would make arrests on the basis of complaints to be registered by medical Superintendents;

(ii) an appeal would be issued through Doordarshan so that all employees are informed that a Group of Ministers had been set up and that they should not take precipitating action;

(iii) the Delhi Govement will take steps to ask all private nursing homes to attend to casualties and emergenies;

(iv) contingency measures would be adopted by individual hospitals to see that the least possible problems were caused to the public; and

(v) specific tie up between designated hospitals and the police could be set in motion for conducting medico-legal work and *post mortems*.

Assistance is also being sought from Railways for attending to emergency cases in their own hospitals.

Retired employees are being recruited to man various facilities.

However, I appeal to our unions to call off their agitation in the interest of patient care and resolve the differences by negotiations instead.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE (West Bengal): Sir, I would like to seek a few clarifications from the hon. Minister. He has stated in his statement that the employees, who were on strike, built up their campaign from 22nd May. In order to tackle the problem, apart from the Health Minister's initiatives, a Group of Ministers was appointed. He has mentioned only about the composition of a Group of Mnister, he has not mentioned when it was appointed. It was announced on the television on 8th July, and it had its meetings only on 13th July and 19th July. So, these are the measures, which the Government has taken. I am not going into the merit of this case at this late hour, but the fact remains--I have mentioned it in the morning and requested the Government to make a statement--that this type of a picture which is being projected is really alarming. We have to resolve this issue. Of course, he would have made an appeal. He would have made some contigency arrangements. he would have given certain offers. But, I would like to know as to why this was not done earlier. When he felt that the Group of Ministers' intervention could be effective, why did it not meet earlier? The employees went on strike from 20th June, while the Group of Ministers could meet only on 13th July and 19th July. When was it constituted? And when it was constituted, they should have taken this matter seriously. Is it because they wanted to give a high profile publicity by announcing that a Group of Ministers has been appointed and it would take care of it?

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES (Goa): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, it has been rightly mentioned by hon. Pranab Mukherjee that the Governement had on 22nd May, received advance information and notice from the Union. Till now there is no Contingency Plan. At least, the other day the hon. Minister of Communications came and mentioned about the Contingency Plan. We disapprove the army being called in. The Minister had mentioned that only the Railway hospitals have been requested. He had also mentioned about private nursing homes. I do not think they will come and fulfil the social obligation. I would like to know whether the Government is paying these private nursing homes and whether the hospitals of the Defence Ministry will be

requested. They have not mentioned that. They have hospitals under the Navy, the Air Force and the Army. Here is an occasion for you to request the Defence Minister to come to the rescue of the people who are suffering in the hospitals rather than bring military out here, like you did in Uttar Pradesh. You request the military hospitals, Navy hospitals and Air Force hospitals to accommodate people with serious cases. I do not think there are enough private nursing homes in the city.

Secondly, we have seen that whenever there is a weak Government like the one we have at the Centre, there is a tendency for all service institutions to go on strike. Because whenever they go on strike their demands are met. I would like to know whether you will see that these service institutions are privatised if not brought under certain Trusts and made to function like the private hospitals. In private hospitals we do not see such sights as all their demands are met. They have gone on strike because you have not fulfilled the Fourth and Fifth Pay Commission recommendations. If you are going to treat these hospital services like a Government Department then I do not think you can give any service to the patients.

Moreover, all the Government Hospitals run by the Government or Municipalities are most unhygienic. So, you better privatise these hospitals and that will be the service you will be doing to this country.

SHRI JIBON ROY (West Bengal): I am not suggesting for the privatisation of Government hosspitals. That means that the poor people will the thrown out of the facilities which they are getting at present. My point is that strike is breaking out not only in Delhi, but also in other parts of the country. In Haryana nurses are on strike for the last 1½ month. It is mainly on the question of implementation of the Fourth and Fifth Pay Commission's reccommendations. It is natural, sometimes it happens. Mr. Vice-Chairman, you know that certain different anomalies develop, parity develops, at the that time the Government should take a compassionate and also a composite view of the problem. Instead of doing that you start taking piecemeal decisions. When nurses went on strike in Delhi you came to a settlement with them. But, I came to know that you have not implemented that settlement till now. I wish to know from the Minister whether they have implemented it or not. It is know that whenever some concession is given to a section of employees in the same institution, the same demand will come from other sections also. Therefore, I shall urge upon you to take a composite view about this thing and negotiate and settle.

The second point is, as it has rightly been said, now you are taking a military attitude and trying to impose military discipline. Today itself I heard that you have arrested so many people. Mostly all the leaders have been arrested. You have dismissed 230 employees. But, you are taking that position now. If you had decided earlier that you would take this attitude, why were no alternative arrangements made long back? Their agitation started in the month of May itself. The first meeting of the Committee took place on 31th June. Was the Government sleeping? The nurses strike and then the strike by the nurses of Haryana were themselves indicative that something is going to happen. Therefore, I wish to know your view. After all, you have to solve this, you cannot continue like that. I would request the hon. Minister to take a comprehensive view and start negotiations with the employees. You should start with a clean slate. In the end, I would like to know as to how many employees have been dismissed till now; and how many have been arrested. Please give us the number.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI (Kerala): Mr Vice-Chairman, Sir, the whole purpose behind our demand that a statement should be made was to see that we are able to find a solution to the ordeal being faced by the poor people in the capital city of Delhi because of the strike by the hospital employees.

The real problem is one of a crisis of confidence. First of all, look at demand (vi). 'Implementation of the agreement signed on 23.9.1997'. Why did you not implement this agreement? We had the nurses strike earlier. You reached an agreement with them and the strike was called off. But you have not implemented the agreement so far.

Sir, when an agreement is signed by the Government, the Government is expected to implement it. When you are not implementing the agreement signed by you, nobody will obey

you; nobody will hear you.

On page 2 of the statement, the hon. Minister has referred to the setting up of a Group of Ministers to examine these demands. He has said that the Government had offered a substantial increase in the Patient Care Allowance, but the employees wanted it to be in proportion to the increase in the Nursing Allowance.

Leave alone the other demands. In the first instance, what is the difficulty in implementing the agreement signed with the employees on 23.9.97? If this agreement is implemented, most of the problems could be solved.

Similarly, demand (v): anomalies/disparities arising out of the recommendations of the Fourth and Fifth Pay Commission, to be removed. This is a natural process. Everybody knows. You and I know. Similar anomalies are there in the other Ministries also. You can, at least, say that on the pattern of other Ministries, this would be looked into.

When we look at the demands, we find that most of them could be easily settled. It is, as I said, a crisis of confidence. When, as in the case of the agreement reached with the nurses, the Government does not implement the agreement signed by it, how would the employees trust the Government?

Therefore, I appeal to the hon. Minister. It is easy for the Government to settle this issue, provided the Government takes the workers and the unions into confidence, by first implementing the agreement signed with them and then try to find a solution to the other problems like the anomalies, etc.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI (Tamil Nadu): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, from the statement made by the hon. Minister, I find that the workers made their demands in the last week of May. Then, the first meeting with the representatives of the Joint Council was held on 30th June. Five weeks had gone by between 22nd May and 30th June. Why did not the Government hold a meeting with the Joint Council earlier? It has not been stated as to what action was taken in between.

We find from the press that the Government had approached the Defence Department for getting their services, but the Defence Department had refused. I would like to know whether it is a fact or not. I cannot understand how the Defence Department can refuse help. If it is so, what is the reason behind it?

Another thing is, I have come to know that just now, there was a lathicharge against the workers. It seems of them have been injured and had to be hospitalised. The hospital employees themselves had to be hospitalised. I would like to know whether it is a fact. If it is a fact, how many have been injured? Also, has there been only lathicharge, or, there has been firing also? If there had been firing, has there been any casualty?

Then, there is one thing which has been left out in this statement, I feel. This is about the restructuring of the different categories. According to the Government — this is what we have seen in the press — nearly 350 categories are to be restructured. But as per the employees, the number of categories is not more than 135. Therefore, I would like to know as to what is the number of categories. Has any restructuring been demanded by the employees? If restructuring has been demanded, why has it been left out in the statement? That is one. However, I welcome one thing, that he has given the statement in an elaborate manner.

Then, I quote:

> "The meetings of the GOM have been held on 13th July and 19th July, 1998. In the last meeting taken by the DGHS, on 22nd July, 1998 a substantial increase in the HPCA/PCA was offered to the striking employees along with an assurance that left out categories of employees connected with patient care will also get this benefit and also the washing allowance."

It goes on like that. The next paragraph says, and I quote:

"These demands are being examined by the Government."

Have you taken any decision on the demands? If not, what is the present position? We want to now this. You have not taken any decision, and these demands are being examined by you. How many days will you take to come to some decision on these demands? I want to now this also.

What I feel is that since this is an essential service for the public, for the people, the Government should expedite its action to solve the problem. It must have a dialogue with them. At least you constitute some committee. That committee should go into all these demands. If you are not able to find a solution immediately, within 24 hours, you constitute a committee. You make them accept it and see that they resume their work.

With these words, I conclude. Thank you.

SHRI GOPALSINH G. SOLANKI (Gujarat): Sir, the hospital employees are on strike since the 20th July. Right from today they are going to enter into a hunger strike.

So far as their demands are concerned, their first demand is for three time-bound promotions. In many of the States such promotions are being given. Group D means Class IV, and Group C means Class III. After nine years if one has not been promoted, one would like to be promoted or one would like to get the salary of the higher grade. If one has not been promoted to the upper grade, he deserves to be given the salary of the higher grade, despite his being in Class IV. In Gujarat also we used to promote after nine years, 18 years and 27 years those Government servants who have not got promotion on completion of so many years of service. These three promotions are given to them. I think this will solve the problem of the employees. What is coming in the way of taking a decision on this? This is the first point.

At the same time, so far as the question of better pay-scales and better allowances is concerned, it would require a change of the structure. It will not be possible to do this at the same time. At least, so far as the question of washing allowance and other things are concerned, the Class IV employees deserve to get them. If they are not paid these things, they will work with very dirty clothes in the wards. They deserve these things. I would like to know why this is not being considered by the Group of Ministers when they is not being considered by the Group of Ministers when they are trying to solve this for the last one-and-a-half months? I want to kknow this.

श्री संघ प्रिय गौतम (उत्तर प्रदेश): उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मंत्री जी का बयान बड़ा अधूरा, भ्रमात्मक और अनिश्चितता से भरा हुआ है। न तो इससे यह पता लगता है कि कर्मचारियों ने अपनी मांगों के बारे में कब आपको ज्ञापन दिया था और न ही इससे यह जाहिर होता है कि उन मांगों के बारे में कर्मचारियों और सरकार के बीच में कभी कोई वार्ता हुई या नहीं हुई और यदि वार्ता हुई तो वार्ता विफल हो गई, इसलिए कर्मचारियों को हड़ताल करने पर मजबूर होना पड़ा, कहीं भी इसमें कोई जिक्र नहीं है। इसके अलावा जब 20 तारीख को कर्मचारी हड़ताल पर चले गए और उन्होंने यह नोटिस दे दिया कि 25 तारीख से अनिश्चतकालीन हड़ताल पर चले जाएंगे तो यह कदम आज जो आप उठा रहे हैं बल्कि आपने उठाए भी नहीं है आपने यह पहले ही कदम क्यों नहीं उठाए?

आज भी आप क्या कह रहे हैं कि सरकार दूरदर्शन पर अपील जारी करेगी। सरकार ने अपील जारी क्यों नहीं की? दिल्ली सरकार प्रायवेट नर्सिंग होम्स को कहेगी, कदम उठाएगी कि वे ऐसी व्यवस्था करें कि मरीजों को परेशानी न हो। आपने पहले से यह निर्देश क्यों नहीं जारी किए और दिल्ली सरकार ने यह कदम क्यों नहीं उठाए? आप वे क्या आवश्यक कदम उठाने जा रहे हैं जिनसे कि कोई भी परेशानी मरीजों को न हो और समस्या का समाधान हो जाए? मुझको आपकी इस भाषा से अनिश्चितता नजर आ रही है। कृपया आप बताएं कि आप इन समस्याओं के समाधान के लिए त्वरित क्या कार्यवाही करने जा रहे हैं?

SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA (Karnataka): Sir, the purpose of demanding a statement from the Minister was to know the facts, but, unfortunately, the Statement reveals nothing. The Government wants to hide more than it wants to reveal.

SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA (West Bengal): It looks like a hidden agenda.

SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA: Yes, it looks like a hidden agenda.

Sir, six demands have been listed in the statement of the hon. Minister. The point is, what is the reaction of the Government on each one of the demand listed. Nothing has been said about it. The hon. Minister has only said that a substantial increase was offered. What was that? What was their demand and what is it that the Government has conceded? What is substantial has not been spelt out. Why are you shy of telling the facts to Parliament? Why has

it not been said? The Government wants to hide everything. They have demanded three time bound promotions. What is the reaction of the Government to that? Is the Government agreeable or not? You have said nothing about it. You have said better pay-scales to be given to Group C and D employees. You could have said this is what they are now drawing and this is what they are demanding. What was recommended by the Fifth Pay-Commission and what is the disparity?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANATAN BISI): You want details thereof.

SHRI H. HANUMANTHAPPA: Yes, Sir. This is not the way the hon. Minister should treat Parliament. Sir, you should take note of it. When we demanded a statement from the Government, it has to come with facts and details, and not just make a statement and get away with it. The Statement should state the problem of the concerned people. At least Parliament should know what is their Pay-scale, what they were drawing and what is their demand, the difference in their pay-scales at the time of the Fourth pay Commission's recommendation and the Fifth Pay Commission's recommendations. What is the increase that they are demanding?

Sir, the Statement says they are demanding night weightage allowance, risk and hazard allowance, washing allowance. But, it has not stated what their demand is—Rs. 1000, Rs. 500 or Rs. 5,000? And what is it that the Government has conceded. Details are not given. When he talks of patients care allowance, he says a substantial increase is being demanded without specifying the amount demanded.

Sir, my friend Mr. Ravi had asked about the agreement reached on 23.9.1997. Why has the agreement not been implemented yet? Sir, actually the Fifth Pay Commission has given a bulk of the increase to the higher posts, neglecting the interests of Group C and Group D employees, who are low-paid employees. When this country can pay crores of rupees as increase in the salaries of the higher grade employees, why should the Government be hesitent on considering the demands of the low-paid employees, who are doing human service and that too in hospitals under difficult conditions? The Government has not accepted even the washing allowance. I do not know why the Government is very hard on these demands? Hope the hon. Minister while replying to the clarifications on these points would also send a message to the striking employees to stop their strike and come back to duty.

श्री ओम प्रकाश कोहली (दिल्ली): उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, ये जो 6 मांगे हैं, इनमें से छठी मांग इंप्लीमेंटेशन आफ द एग्रीमेंट्स साइन्ड आन 23.9.97 है। मैं यह कहना चाहूंगा कि जो वर्तमान सरकार है यह तो अप्रैल 1998 में आई..

श्री एच. हनुमनतप्पा: इसमें क्यों पोलिटिक्स लाते हैं।

श्री ओम प्रकाश कोहली: मेरी बात तो सुनिए। मैं तो उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय को सम्बोधित कर रहा हूं।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री सनातन बिसि): आप बोलिए।

श्री ओम प्रकाश कोहली: मैं यह जानना चाहता हूं कि 23.9.97 को जो एग्रीमेंट हुआ तो 23.9.97 से लेकर अप्रैल, 1998 तक इन सात महीनों में कौन से स्पेसिफिक स्टेप्स लिए गए?

इस एग्रीमेंट को इंप्लीमेंट करने के लिए और अगर पहले की सरकार ने कोई स्टैप नहीं लिए तो वर्तमान सरकार इसको इंप्लीमेंट करने के लिए क्या स्पेसेफिक कदम उठा रही है? दूसरा मेरा यह कहना है कि जो ग्रुप ऑफ मिनिस्टर्स है यह कब कंस्टीट्यूट हुआ? इसकी कोई डेट इसमें नहीं दी गई है। माननीय मंत्री महोदय जरा इसकी भी जानकारी दें। तीसरी बात जो माननीय श्री संघ प्रिय गौतम जी ने कही है कि सरकार दूरदर्शन पर अब हड़ताली कर्मचारियों को यह जानकारी देगी कि एक ग्रुप ऑफ मिनिस्टर्स एप्वायंट किया गया है। मैं समझता हूं कि यह जानकारी तो बहुत पहले ही देनी चाहिए थी। इसको देने में अनावश्यक विलम्ब हुआ है। उधर से एक माननीय सदस्य ने कहा... (**व्यवधान**)

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Is he a Minister? Let him put his questions.

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री सनातन बिसि): कोहली जी, आप अपना बोलिए।....(**व्यवधान**) कोहली जी, अन्य मैम्बर क्या बोले हैं वह मत बोलिए। आप अपनी कहिए।

श्री ओम प्रकाश कोहली: मैं वही बतला रहा हूं।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री सनातन बिसि): रिपीट हो रहा है।

श्री ओम प्रकाश कोहली: उपसभाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं

किसी अन्य मैंबर ने जो बात कही है उसी बात को थोड़ा और बल दे रहा हूं।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री सनातन बिसि): लेकिन वह रिपीट होता जा रहा है।

श्री ओम प्रकाश कोहली: एक मेरा और कहना है, माननीय मंत्री जी से हम यह जानना चाहेंगे कि यह जो 6 मांगे हैं, इन 6 मांगों में से जो नेगोशिएसंस अब तक चल रही हैं उस बात-चीत के दौरान इनमें से क्रूशियल डिमांड्ज कौन सी हैं जिस पर सारा मामला अटका हुआ है और नेगोशिएसंस प्रोसीड नहीं कर रही हैं? क्योंकि जब भी हड़ताली कर्मचारी बंच ऑफ डिमांड्ज रखते हैं तो उनमें से कुछ पेरीफेरियल डिमांड्ज होती हैं और कुछ सैन्ट्रल क्रूशियल डिमांड्ज होती हैं। तो हम यह भी जानना चाहेंगे कि इनमें से ऐसी सैन्ट्रल और क्रूसियल डिमांड्ज कौन सी हैं जिसके कारण नेगोशिएसंस प्रोसीड नहीं कर रही हैं?

SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI: Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, first of all, I am thankful to the hon. Members who have offered their suggestions and inquired very anxiously about the details of the striking hospital employees and the position taken by the Government. I really associate myself with the concerns expressed by the hon. Members; and I also share their sentiments. Just for the information of the House, I would like to say that this statement was prepared very hurriedly. Of course, I admit that it is not sufficient and it is certainly not complete.

The demands of our striking employees' unions are 19 in total. Of the 19 demands, some demands come in the purview of the Health Ministry itself and some demands come in the purview of the Finance Ministry and the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions. We have taken up these demands with them.

Many Members have put a question that when this agreement was signed in 1987, why was it pending all these years. In 1987, even before that, the demand of the striking group C and D employees in Delhi Government hospitals is very old.

They have been asking for a better deal with regard to the same allowances washing allowance, hospital care allowance, patient care allowance, etc. They work in such a risky situation and conditions like that of mortuary and burns ward and really, it is appalling to see when they are on duty in certain hospitals in such a situation. But the Government—the then Government or this Government; there is no politics in it—in 1987, made an agreement with the striking employees. And before that agreement, there was also a Group of Ministers and that Group of Ministers consisted of a former Prime Minister and a former Finance Minister and a former Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. But all those recommendations and subsequent analyses and the demands, till this May, were lying collecting dust at various levels some were in the Health Ministry, some were taken up with the Finance Ministry and some were lying with the Department of Personnel. We have inherited such a Government. It is just four months since this Government was formed. Immediately after it was formed, it was the doctors who launched their strike. Then the nurses followed. And now it is the 'karamcharis'. The doctors wanted the non-practising allowance. This was their long-pending demand. *(Interruptions).*

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Just one second. I heard the hon. Minister talking about the agreement of 1987. Was the agreement on 23.9.1997 or 1987? What is the actual position?

SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUTAM: Sir, ...*(Interruptions).*

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: The statement says that it was on 23.9.1997. But I heard him saying '1987'. *(Interruptions).*

SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI: Sir, I stand corrected. *(Interruptions).*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANATAN BISI): Just a minute. *(Interruptions).* Mr. Minister, it is very clear that you are talking of 23rd September, 1997.

SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI: But the problems are pending since 1987. In 1997, again there was a move from the employees' side. The Government also considered that. Since 1987, these problems have been pending. Therefore, these employees. ....*(Interruptions).*

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Please let us not be confused. You said that there was another Group of Ministers consisting of a former Prime Minister, a former Finance Minister and a Chief Minister of U.P. When was this Group constituted, in 1987 or in 1997? Please be specific. *(Interruptions).*

SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUTAM: Sir, kindly excuse me for a small interruption. We should praise the hon. Minister for his honesty. In the beginning of his reply itself, he has said that this statement has been prepared hurriedly. Why do you harass him? *(Interruptions).*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANATAN BISI): No, not harassing. *(Interruptions).* Please wait. I am getting it cleared.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI: I feel that the demands were being kept in abeyance from 1987, but they were put forth to the Government in a written form in 1997.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANATAN BISI): Please wait. He is replying.

SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI: The Group of Ministers was formed in 1987 itself and they gave their recommendations. In 1997 again, the Department formed a Committee at the Health Ministry level and they also made their recommendations some of which were favourable to the employees. They were all pending totally ....*(Interruptions).*

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: It is not a question of recommendations. It is a question of agreement. The word used was 'agreement'.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANATAN BISI): Please wait. I am getting all these things. Mr. Minister, we are concerned with Demand No. (vi) You have to explain what is said there is the statement. Why are you mentioning 1987? There is no mention of 1987 here.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: We are not referring to the recommendations. We are referring to the agreement. Both sides are agreeing to the statement. ....*(Interruptions).*

SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI: This agreement was signed in 1997. These demands have been pending for a long time. Anyway, we are not blaming anybody. But it has come to our lot and we have to bear this. Another question which was put by some hon. Member was with regard to the agreement reached between the nurses union and the Government. In this connection, I would like to inform the House that an agreement has been signed to this effect. That agreemnt has been accepted by the Cabinet. The representatives of the Committee were appointed in the Health Ministry itself and they are looking after the question of implementation of the nurses grievances separately. After the nurses strike, our karamcharis have come out with a charter of demands. Immediately, on receipt of these demands, the Department of Health and Family Welfare has considered it, analysed it and finally we thought that this involves not only the Health Ministry. ....*(Interruptions).*

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANATAN BISI): You have already stated that.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: You have already referred to a group of Ministers, that is, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Personnel and so on. Everything is there in the statement itself.

SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI: We have taken up the matter at the level of the Prime Minister requesting him to intervene in the matter. He has very kindly appointed a group of Ministers consisting of three important Departments involving these karamcharis. We had taken this up with the Prime Minister on 9th June, 1998 as a result of which a group of Ministers was constituted by the Prime Minister and the first meeting of that group was held on 13th June, 1998. *(Interruptions).*

SHRI JOHN F. FERNANDES: Sir, we want clarifications to the queries raised by us. We do not want the hon. Minister to refer to the statement.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANATAN BISI) : Mr. Minister, don't refer to the statement.

SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI: The hon. Member, Shri Fernandes, while speaking, referred to the contingency plan, the railway hospitals and the defence hospitals. He has also said that this Government is a weak Government. He has also given a suggestion for the privatisation of the Government hospitals and all that. He has also put a question as to what the Government is doing with regard to all these things. What is the contingency plan of the Government? How is the Government going to seek the help of the Defence hospitals? How is the Government

going to cope with the situation? What steps is the Government going to take? All these questions were put by him in his speech. I would like to inform him that we will ask the Defence hospitals to extend their help. We have already taken up the matter with them. Mr. Fernandes, while speaking, has said that this Government is a weak Government. Whatever it is, the Government faces a problem. This problem is not of our creation. this problem has been pending for a long time. So far as the question of privatisation of the Government hospitals is concerned, I would like to inform him that our employees are opposed to privatisation. We cannot help it. We have taken a number of steps to settle the problem. So far as the questions of implementation of the Fifth Pay Commission recommendations and the anomalies arising out of the recommendations of the Fourth Pay Commission are concerned, I would like to inform the hon. Member that there are Anomalies Committees in every department, appointed to take care of this problem. This system has been in existence for all the times and everybody knows now long these Committees take to sort out a problem and now these Committees are functioning. Some hon. Member was inquiring about a time-frame. I would like to inform him that it is not in our hands. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Mr. Minister, we are not levelling any charge against you. This is a system which we have adopted. These Committees are there. They are looking into the entire thing. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI DALIT EZHILMALAI: I would like to say that all possible efforts will be made to reach an agreement and allout efforts will be made to settle the demands to the maximum extent possible.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: That is what we wanted. Thank you very much.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI SANATAN BISI): The House stands adjourned to meet tomorrow at 11.00 A.M.

The House then adjourned at forty-four minutes past eight of the clock till eleven of the clock on Friday, the 24th July, 1998.